

Congress Looks at Transportation

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8th District
Union City, Tennessee

It is always a pleasure to come speak to state and county officials. My first elective job when I was 21 was as a member of the County Court of Obion county, Tennessee. Before my election to the Congress, I served as executive secretary of the Tennessee County Services association, which is an organization composed of the county judges and the county highway officials of Tennessee.

In the "Congress Looks at Transportation" I am happy to report to you that we passed the Airport Act which I hope will soon be worked out in conference and will come along and be helpful in developing the airports of this nation. Also it will be beneficial in adding to the major airports safety equipment which is a necessity in the air age that we are now in.

I have often heard it said that if you are going to be a wheel you have got to roll, and that is literally true today. The people are demanding more and more roads and better roads. A few years ago we were successful in passing the greatest highway program this nation has ever known. Last year we passed an emergency highway program to help alleviate unemployment and to really put the show on the road, so to speak, to accelerate this great program.

Our new highway program is not, as you know, financed as other programs have been in the past, but a trust fund was set up with some of the highway users' taxes to pay for this expanded program.

Due to this accelerated program last year, the trust fund for this fiscal year will be depleted. There will be no money available for 1961 according to our estimates, and only \$500 million for the fiscal year of 1962, with a total of \$4.7 billion authorized.

It is imperative that Congress do something and do it at once to alleviate this situation. Several plans have been suggested. The President has suggested that the gas tax be increased. Others have suggested that we go into deficit financing. And one proposal, which I like the best, is that highway users' taxes which are now being diverted for non-highway use be channeled into the highway trust fund. I favor this plan.

You, the state and county highway officials of Indiana, are sleeping giants. I feel that the time has come that you should assert yourselves and let your representatives in the House of Representatives and the Senate know how you feel on this important matter. So, let's be awake and away, and when you return to your respective homes after this meeting I suggest that you contact your Representatives in your respective Districts in the House of Representatives and write to your two Senators giving your views on this important matter.

We have a great program started to give to the American people the road system that they need in these changing times. Let's not be a flash in the pan but let's continue this program.